Taking the volume of original civil litigation *with reference to the population*, there was, in 1086, one suit for 65 persons, whereas in 1076 there was one suit for 79 persons. This represents an increase of about 21 per cent over a period of 10 years. The volume of original civil litigation in Travancore can hardly be deemed excessive when it is compared with that of some of the more advanced British Districts. For example, in 1910, Tanjore had one suit for every 48 persons, and North Malabar one for every 39. Several other Madras Districts were only slightly better than Travancore. Tinnevelly had one suit for every 70 persons. In the Madras city, it was one for 26. The Government do not by any means wish to minimise the evils of litigation, but it has to be remembered that, with the advent of new ideas, the increasing inadaptability of the Maraumakkathayam system of holding property, and the growing complexity of life, *some* increase of litigation is probably inevitable, and it is by no means certain that the increase visible in Travancore during the last ten years is a particularly unhealthy sign. In any case, the Government do not hold with those who are for reducing the facilities open to litigants. The policy of choking off litigation seldom pays in the long run. A large volume of the civil litigation of Travancore is, however, of a petty kind, which it is probably a waste of judicial power to get disposed of even in the lowest of the regular Courts, I mean, the Courts of the Munsiffs. For example, in 1086, out of the 51,617 original suits filed in the Courts of the Munsiffs, so many as 38,004 were suits for the recovery of monies, and of these, so many as 25,471 suits were of a small-cause nature and were for sums of not more than Rs. 50. The Government have felt for some time that it would be probably well if some means could be devised by which petty money suits could be disposed of in the localities where they arose, and with this object in view, it has been resolved—agreeably to the suggestion made by several Members at the last Session—to introduce tentatively the system of Village Panchayats. A Bill is being drafted for the purpose which, it is hoped, will, in due course, become law. The success of the scheme will of course depend, firstly, on the law being a thoroughly workable one, and secondly, on the places tentatively selected being particularly free from those factions and caste and racial antipathies which, in Travancore, as elsewhere, poison public life and seriously handicap the progress of the people.

9. **Registration.**—The number of registration offices remained the same as in the previous year, but the total number of documents registered rose by about 8,000, and the average per office was 3,633. The receipts of the department rose very slightly, by about Rs. 2,000, the expenditure however going up by about Rs. 6,000. The result was that the ratio of the expenditure to the gross income, which had risen from 30 per cent in 1083. to 31 per cent in 1084. and again to 34 per cent in 1085, rose to 35 per cent in 1086. It is in contemplation to increase the number of the offices and to improve the pay of the officers of the department, specially in the lower ranks, and it is anticipated that, as a result of these changes, the ratio of the expenditure to the gross income would still further go up, notwithstanding the revision in the scale of fees recently sanctioned.

10. **The Agricultural Department.**—The Agricultural Department continued to do good work under its capable and enthusiastic Director. One of the most promising signs of the time in Travancore is the increasing interest taken by the people in agricultural matters. The work of the department has, so far, been greatly facilitated and popularised by the co-operation of leading ryots all over the State.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

I would specially refer, in this connection, to the good work being done at Kayankulam, where the virulent disease affecting the cocoanut trees is being combated with considerable success. The ryots there have followed the lead given by the Agricultural Department with commendable zeal and perseverance. Local committees have been formed for the purpose of popularising the measures (for the eradication of the disease) introduced by the department. The Government have reason to hope that, if these measures are persisted in for another five or six years, this disease, which has been with us for over a quarter of a century, and which latterly has assumed in several places a virulent form, will be wholly a thing of the past.

11. **Other Industries.**—The information given in the report regarding the industries of the State, other than agriculture, is necessarily meagre, for the reason that no General Industrial Survey of the State has yet been done. This question, as also the connected question of Technical and Industrial Education, have been engaging the consideration of the Government for some time, but definite action has not yet been decided upon.

12. **Public Works.**—The outlay on Public Works during the year amounted to Rs. 25,65,000, of which the Chief Engineer spent Rs. 22,78,000, and the Maramat Department Rs. 2,87,000. The outlay incurred by the Chief Engineer in the previous year was Rs. 24,99,000, so that there was a reduction in the expenditure by him of nearly Rupees two and a quarter lakhs. The Public Works Department suffered much from short-handedness, during the year, and the entire executive staff had to be reorganised and strengthened. It is anticipated that, as a result of this action, the department would spend more in future years than it had been able to do in the past; also, with the stronger staff we now have, it should be possible to get a better return for our expenditure than hitherto. It is a matter for satisfaction that, even during 1086, notwithstanding the short-handedness of the department, the Chief Engineer succeeded in spending practically the full allotment for "Communications". The outlay on "Communications" rose from Rs. 8,12,000 in 1085 to Rs. 8,63,000 in 1086, *i. e.*, by more than half a lakh. There can be no doubt that, for a long time to come, the department will have to devote a great deal of its attention to the development of communications, especially in Middle and North Travancore. Referring to this subject, the Chief Engineer has written as follows to the Government :—"Looking to the future, I must say that, while I can foresee a very large "increase under 'Buildings' if the projects of the Darbar Physician, and in particular "of the Director of Public Instruction, are to be carried out, my opinion is that, for the "proper development of the country, improvements in 'Communications' are needed "more. The broken nature of the country calls for much work on roads and bridges, "and while on the one hand the extension of the road system, which has extended very "little during the last fifteen years, is absolutely necessary if the country is to develop, on "the other hand, more than two-thirds, to put it at a low figure, of the bridges on the "existing roads, will have to be renewed in the near future to satisfy the requirements "of the present day traffic. There is hardly a bridge, of those built before 1896, that "was ever intended to carry more than a country cart, so that, even if they are not "unsound, they are obsolete. The Forest Department must have traction engines, but "there is not one of our roads on which they can be used. A company is running "omnibuses to Nagercoil; but the Kuzhithurai bridge will have to be closed at an early "date for renewal. No heavy load can be taken along the Quilon-Shencotta or "Trivandrum-Shencotta roads, while the state of the bridges in the Trivandrum-Quilon

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly